



James Hall Couriers: We deliver safely

Safety is at the heart of everything we do at James Hall Couriers.

We know that our people are, by the very nature of our business, exposed to high levels of risk on the road and we work hard to ensure they are trained and equipped to minimise those risks.

We ensure our vehicles are well specified and are always roadworthy.

We take pride in our drivers being amongst the best trained on the road.

We invest in best-in-class processes and procedures to manage our operations safely.



James Hall Couriers (JMHC) were founded in 2011 and have grown rapidly to the point where we operate over 700 vans at 'peak' (Black Friday to Xmas) – making us one of Amazon’s largest Delivery Service Providers providing final mile delivery.

We deliver over 12 million parcels each year!

Our ethos has been built around a passion for customer service, reputation and corporate responsibility. We demonstrate this through compliance and our safety and wellbeing culture.

In common with virtually all final mile delivery providers, JMHC’s business model must be flexible to cope with fluctuations in demand so we contract self-employed drivers using hired vans; most vans are provided via JMHC although drivers can provide their own if they meet our criteria.

We have developed a wide range of Standard Operational Procedures (SOP) covering every element of the operation. These include licence and right-to-work checks, pre-use vehicle checks, vehicle loading and manual handling, fatigue and wellbeing management, driver behaviour, use of technology and post-crash procedures.

Each SOP is supported by clear and concise support for drivers and operational staff via our training academy with training on each SOP being delivered as part of our onboarding process along with monthly refresher sessions delivered via webinar and toolbox talks circulated across all members of staff to ensure transparency and understanding.

Driver and Vehicle Safety

We recognised that a vital part of any safe and compliant operational process was a confidence that vans were always roadworthy, and drivers always fit to drive. This confidence is achieved using an app to check out the van and confirm fitness to drive.

The app walks the driver through vehicle safety checks and provides immediate notification of any faults identified to JMHC’s fleet managers who can support the driver to resolve the issue. Drivers are enabled to report faults identified mid-shift through the tool to their fleet manager and not to wait for the next pre-use check. The app also provides the driver with further information on the van including what to do in the case of breakdown as well as a crash reporting tool.

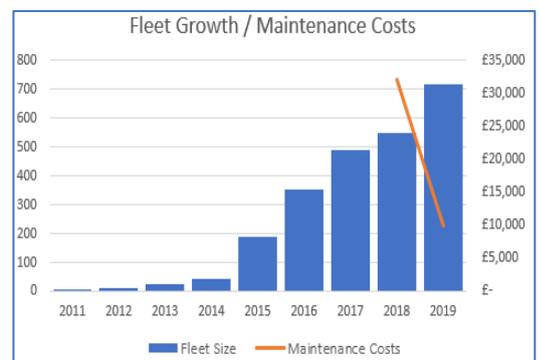
Early reporting of issues via the app and the introduction of inhouse maintenance reduced maintenance costs from £32k in 2018 to £10k in 2019 and increased vehicle utilisation by 12%.

The mandatory pre-use check app also requires the driver to confirm that they are to the best of their knowledge fit to drive. The driver must confirm they are not under the influence of drink and drugs, have the appropriate driving licence, are not overly fatigued and have no medical conditions that would adversely affect their ability to drive. These declarations are supported by random checks as part of JMHC’s extensive fit-to-drive policy.

“We know that our people are exposed to risk every day on the roads.

We want everyone home safe and we also want other road users to be confident we are taking their safety seriously too”

Rebecca Hall – Director



“We don’t see that using self-employed drivers in any way reduces our obligation to be running a safe operation; in fact, we feel it provides us with a great opportunity to demonstrate our responsibility.”

James Hall – Director

“It is clearly not only safer but also more cost effective to be identifying worn brake pads and to change those before continued use requires us to change discs as well.”

James Hall - Director

Vehicle and Load Security

The safety and security of JMHC's vans, load and drivers is also of paramount importance. The final mile sector is often targeted for thefts of vehicles and parcels. We recognised this and all their vans are now fitted with identification logos on their roof and remote immobilisation devices.

The implementation of this technology has demonstrably changed driver behaviour by virtually eliminating instances where drivers left vans idling whilst making deliveries and thus vulnerable to opportunistic theft. The system identifies where the driver has opened their door with the key left in the ignition and audibly alerts the driver of this. This alarm is repeated if the situation is not remedied before immobilising and locking the vehicle doors; at this time a SMS message is sent to the drivers' supervisor so they can check the drives' safety.

Fatigue and Stress



Research commissioned by DfT identified that fatigue was a significant factor in 1 in 6 crashes on the strategic road network and was involved in c40% of crashes involving commercial vehicle drivers. A Highways England survey found that 80% of drivers admitted to driving when they felt tired to the point of sleepiness. With this in mind, we have taken a range of steps to raise awareness and minimise the associated risks.

The mandatory driver app requires the driver to confirm they are not unduly fatigued at the beginning of their shift and their supervisors are briefed to watch out for signs of significant tiredness before allowing drivers to proceed. We also monitor our drivers working hours via telematics and drivers are required to take regular breaks.

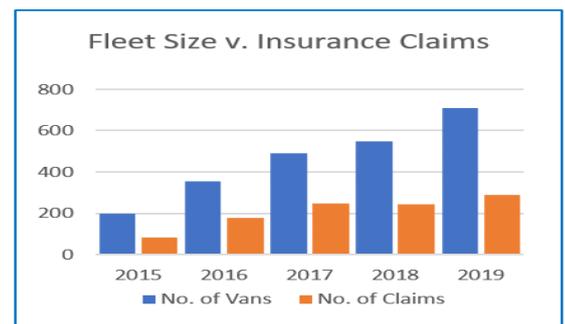
We also advise drivers of the benefits of staying hydrated and healthy eating as part of the induction provided by our academy. This message also forms part of the regular monthly updates mentioned earlier. We have also trialled the provision of drinking water and fresh fruit at our parcel hubs.

"We know our drivers' make the difference. Their professionalism is fundamental to safety. They are all aware of their responsibility to ensure they are fit to drive."

Rebecca Hall - Director

Insurance Costs

Our insurers have reduced our insurance costs by over £1m (2018 – 19). We have demonstrated an improved claims history and our insurers recognise we are a better risk going forward with our strong compliance processes. The ratio of claims to the number of vehicles operated has reduced by some 20% over the last 3 years and is continuing to improve.



Fuel Savings

We have cut fuel costs by £80,000 p.a. (2018 – 19) by improving reporting lines to eliminate driver fraud and purchasing ad-blue and lubricants in bulk. This fully auditable process also protects the integrity of the drivers self-employed status.

Driver Training

Like other operators in the sector, we are continually recruiting drivers with the majority having never worked in the industry before. We feel strongly that in order to get the best from their drivers and, importantly, for the drivers to get the best from their job, training has an important role to play.

"We want our drivers to be recognised as the best trained in the sector."

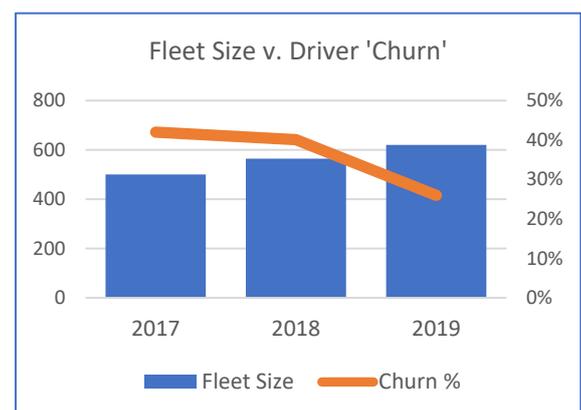
Rebecca Hall - Director

JMHC's School of Excellence supports drivers and supervisors by providing training on their Health and Safety responsibilities, rules of the road, vehicle safety checks, personal and property security, and customer interaction. This training is a blend of classroom, online and on-the-job.

Driver Retention

A 2018 report published by The American Trucking Association suggests that the delivery driver sector averages 90% driver turnover; a figure that is, anecdotally, mirrored in the UK. To tackle this we introduced a Driver Recommendation Scheme where existing drivers are invited to recommend a friend via the driver app with a financial reward if their recommendation is taken on.

The recommendation scheme paired with the driver wellbeing initiatives mentioned above have reduced recruitment costs by 12% over 2018 v 2019 with an average turnover of 26%, well below the national average, giving JMHC a clear business advantage.



Vehicle Partnering



The final mile delivery sector often has a poor reputation with vehicle rental businesses for vehicle damage and high end of rental recharges. We wanted to manage that cost and have built strong relationships with a small number of van rental businesses. They recognise our strong operational protocols because vans are returned in good condition. This is supported by having our own inhouse maintenance and bodyshop facilities – 134 vans were recently returned to hirers post-peak 2019 with no recharge fees being levied! Whilst it is difficult to attribute exact figures to this, we have seen both a reduction in the number of damage incidents and their severity (reflected in our improved insurance performance) which has supported the introduction of our repair facilities to deal with minor repairs.

Supporting other operators

JMHC were the first final mile provider to achieve FTA's Van Excellence Accreditation and DFBB Champion status. This recognition has provided an opportunity to support other van operators, regardless of fleet size or sector, in managing their road risk well through the DFBB Champion programme.

JMHC will, via their sister organisation HH Driveright, make available a number of template policies and a routemap of how to achieve improve compliance and safety with a view towards gaining recognition by DFBB, FORS or Van Excellence.

"The DSP community is very active and, whilst we are competitors, we all recognise our collective responsibility to safety. Other providers are keen to understand what can be done, and we are happy to help them. We know our experience can benefit van operators of all sectors of operation and not just couriers."

Rebecca Hall - Director